

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I see my friend from Ohio is in the Chamber. Does the Senator from Ohio wish to be recognized?

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, yes, I do. I wish to be recognized for 10 minutes as part of morning business.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have no morning business. The Senator can proceed as in morning business if he asks. We are not going to have morning business. I say to the Senator, my understanding is you want 10 or 15 minutes to speak as in morning business.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Yes, Mr. President, I do. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

Mr. REID. No objection.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The senior Senator from Ohio is recognized for 10 minutes.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE
LEGISLATION

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, yesterday, Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator WARNER released language for a legislative approach to address global climate change. The committee also has announced a subcommittee hearing on this legislation for October 24. I understand that the subcommittee intends to mark up this legislation on October 31 and move it to the full committee soon thereafter.

I acknowledge the commitment Mr. LIEBERMAN and Mr. WARNER, both of whom I hold in the highest regard, have shown to this issue. However, I am concerned about the aggressive committee agenda for the consideration and markup of this legislation. I would hope that the legislation would proceed under regular order—which for complex environmental legislation establishing new emission control regimes typically includes multiple hearings on the legislative language and ample time for Members to review legislative language.

For example, when the committee was considering multipollutant emission reduction legislation under the Clear Skies Act, the committee held three legislative hearings over a period of 2 months before proceeding to a markup. That process allowed the committee to hear from the Environmental Protection Agency, State and local officials, union representatives, public interest groups, various trade associations, and representatives from financial institutions. This approach provided Members with the input and time necessary for meaningful participation in the committee markup process.

The Subcommittee on Environmental Protection followed a similar process during consideration of the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act. From September 1989 to the final markup in December 1989, the subcommittee held three legislative hearings, which pro-

vided Members with the valuable opportunity to question a wide variety of witnesses on the implications of specific provisions in the legislation.

I also note that, on environmental legislation of significant importance, the committee has a history of expending the time and consideration necessary to achieve broad, bipartisan support before reporting legislation out of committee. In the past, this has ensured that, when moving from full committee to the Senate floor, the legislation has matured sufficiently for consideration by the full Senate body. I believe this front-end work on consensus is even more important given the current demands on floor time and the underlying legislative atmosphere in general.

But this process is also important because we cannot afford to get this wrong. I believe that rushing legislation through committee will not affect a reasonable solution to the problem. We must find a way to harmonize policies that address our Nation's energy, economic, and environmental needs. And the only way we can do this is by taking a detailed look at what has been proposed.

Unfortunately, what we have had in this Nation for many years is a "tail wagging the dog environmental policy" that is hurting our Nation's international competitiveness. Here is an example that we are all familiar with: Coal-fired power plants have become increasingly clean, yet they face a daunting number of new air quality requirements. These requirements are duplicative, inefficient, and create considerable uncertainty for an industry that is providing the nation with one of its most critical resources: safe, economic, and reliable power generation.

These policies have resulted in a sharp increase in the use of natural gas for electric power generation—accounting for almost 94 percent of the increase in domestic demand for natural gas since 1992. The demand for natural gas is sending ripple effects throughout the economy because of its use as both a fuel and a feedstock for the production of everything from fertilizer to plastics to heating homes. This has contributed to loss of over 200,000 manufacturing jobs in Ohio alone. And these sharp price increases continue to impair the competitive position of U.S. manufacturing companies in domestic and world markets.

That our Nation's environmental policies have this type of effect on our economy is not a new revelation. But one thing has become clear—there is a faction of groups that have made it their priority to kill coal. Those that support this objective have illustrated to me that this dialogue is being driven by ideological extremes. This is unfortunate and does nothing to foster an environment where rational policy choices may be made about the serious issue we face.

I recognize that we need to address climate change. But any reasonable

climate change policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would also: Promote economic stability—reductions should not cause fuel switching, sharp electricity rate increases or economic dislocation; promote technology development—legislation must provide incentives to advance the pace of technology; provide for reductions from developing countries—we cannot send jobs overseas to countries that don't share our environmental objectives.

These goals are to keep the Nation's economy, and that of Ohio, on a sure footing while decreasing emissions. Coal is the Nation's most abundant, cheap and accessible energy resource. Its strategic value from a national security and economic perspective should not be underestimated. It is simply nonsensical to put a policy in place that would jeopardize this resource. Climate change requires a long term solution whose strategy is fully capable of accommodating the time necessary to get the technology in place that will ensure coal's continued viability.

An analysis released this summer of the Lieberman-McCain climate change bill—a predecessor to this legislation—which capped greenhouse gas emissions at 60 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2050—is illustrative of my concerns. It concluded: Reductions in real GDP over the lifetime of the bill could be in the order of several trillion dollars. The analysis predicted that in 2050 average household annual consumption would be about \$1,900 lower; gasoline prices would increase approximately \$0.70 per gallon; and electricity prices are projected to be about 25 percent higher. But EPA points out that the impacts may be underestimated. This is because the analysis assumes: One, that carbon capture and storage technologies are widely available at a reasonable cost; and two, a 150-percent increase in nuclear power generation will occur. These assumptions are absurd.

Needless to say, this legislation would cause drastic reductions in the use of coal. Some activists would applaud this, but it could result in the elimination of over 50,000 coal industry jobs. Not exactly a recipe for economic recovery.

If enacting these restrictions would save the world from environmental collapse, as many would have us believe, it might be worth the economic pain. But the proposals, as demonstrated in a more recent EPA analysis requested by Senators BINGAMAN and SPECTER, will have little or no effect on global temperatures. In fact, this study concluded that even the most stringent of the policy proposals under consideration would have a net effect on global atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ of a mere 25 parts per million.

The point of all this is that we need to take the time to fully understand the costs and benefits of the policies that are being advanced to address the problem of climate change. Yes this is a problem that we need to address, but

recklessly moving forward may result in disastrous economic repercussions, with little or no benefit to the environment.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending business be set aside and amendment No. 3358 be called up.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3043, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3043) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Harkin-Specter amendment No. 3325, in the nature of a substitute.

Vitter amendment No. 3328 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide a limitation on funds with respect to preventing the importation by individuals of prescription drugs from Canada.

Dorgan amendment No. 3335 (to amendment No. 3325), to increase funding for the State Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Thune amendment No. 3333 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide additional funding for the telehealth activities of the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Dorgan amendment No. 3345 (to amendment No. 3325), to require that the Secretary of Labor report to Congress regarding jobs lost and created as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Menendez amendment No. 3347 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide funding for the activities under the Patient Navigator Outreach and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2005.

Ensign amendment No. 3342 (to amendment No. 3325), to prohibit the use of funds to administer Society Security benefit payments under a totalization agreement with Mexico.

Ensign amendment No. 3352 (to amendment No. 3325), to prohibit the use of funds to process claims based on illegal work for purposes of receiving Social Security benefits.

Lautenberg-Snowe amendment No. 3350 (to amendment No. 3325), to prohibit the use of funds to provide abstinence education that includes information that is medically inaccurate.

Roberts amendment No. 3365 (to amendment No. 3325), to fund the small business Child Care Grant Program.

Reed amendment No. 3360 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide funding for the trauma

and emergency medical services programs administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Allard amendment No. 3369 (to amendment No. 3325), to reduce the total amount appropriated to any program that is rated ineffective by the Office of Management and Budget through the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized to please state his unanimous consent request again.

AMENDMENT NO. 3358 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3325

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending business be set aside and that amendment No. 3358 on this bill be called up.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. COBURN] proposes an amendment numbered 3358 to amendment No. 3325.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require Congress to provide health care for all children in the U.S. before funding special interest pork projects)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

Sec. _____. (a) This section may be cited as the "Children's Health Care First Act of 2007".

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used for any congressionally directed spending item, as defined by Sec. 521 of Public Law 110-81, until the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services certifies that all children in the U.S. under the age of 18 years are insured by a private or public health insurance plan.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, this amendment, for myself and my colleague Senator BURR, is about the topic of the Children's Health Care First Act of 2007.

There has been a lot of debate, a lot of politics on children's health care. The House failed to override what I think was a poor solution to take care of children in this country by expanding children's health care through the SCHIP program and spending \$4,000 to get \$2,300 worth of coverage for our kids.

What we do know is we do have problems with health care. We need to be debating health care. We need to figure out how we are going to do this. Myself and Senator BURR have an amendment that solves the health care problem, which has not been considered yet but which we are soliciting and for which we have received a number of cosponsors. This amendment, however, redirects us toward priorities. It is something we need to talk about. It is something the Senate doesn't talk about.

We had numerous quotes in this body about how important it is to make sure

kids in this country have access to care. What we do know—and I used the number \$2,300 because that is the high end if we were to buy every kid in this country a health insurance policy. It is probably more like \$1,700. So if you take the \$2,300 that we have as a high-end number to buy kids health insurance, and not put them in something that has a Medicaid stamp or a SCHIP stamp on their forehead but real health insurance, and you look at the earmarks in this bill, which are \$398 million, you could, in fact, buy insurance for 173,000 kids, in this bill alone. So 173,000 children could be covered for health care from the earmarks alone in this bill.

Now, this amendment is real simple. If everybody in this body claims they want to take care of kids and their health care, they ought to be willing to give up their earmarks to cover kids. So what this bill says is, let's have no earmarks, no directed spending until such time as we have covered the kids in this country. We put kids ahead of us. We put kids ahead of our political interests. We put children's health care ahead of the politics and the consequential action of using politics in terms of earmark spending.

Now, \$400 million is a lot of money, and \$400 million is out of the priorities of what this country ought to be doing that are in this bill that is Member-directed spending. This amendment simply says: We don't direct any of that money—none of it, zero, not one earmark—until we have cared for the kids, until we are caring for the kids. So in essence, what we are doing by accepting this amendment is saying, instead of rhetoric, we are going to say kids count. We are going to start putting the priorities back. If access to care for children is important, is it less important than your favorite earmark?

I know if you total up certain of the earmarks of one certain State which has \$72 million worth of earmarks, you have enough to cover all the uninsured kids in that State—all the uninsured kids in that State from the earmarks in this bill. So what are our priorities? Are our priorities children? Are our priorities the health care of kids?

This amendment is going to be a fun vote because what it is going to tell your constituency is: Kids aren't important if you vote to keep your earmarks, but if you say I am willing to abate on the earmarks, and I am going to do what is right. This amendment says none of this directed spending goes until the Secretary of HHS certifies that kids under 18 in this country have access and have care. We have had months of debate about the children's SCHIP. We are going to have more because another bill is coming. But it seems to me the American public might want to ask: Why are you earmarking special money for special projects when you have a chance to make sure it will go toward children and solving the problem?

So this is going to be a tough vote: kids versus my political career, kids